

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: GDS 12-31-80

TAGS: MCAP, NATO, NL

SUBJECT: DPC MEETING, JUNE 24, 1974: STATEMENT BY NETHERLANDS

PERM REP HARTOGH ON PROPOSED FUTURE STRUCTURE OF THE NETHERLANDS

ARMED FORCES

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STATEMENT WHICH NETHERLANDS PERM REP

HARTOGH GAVE AT BEGINNING OF JUNE 24 DPC MEETING. (WE WERE INFORMED BY OFFICIAL OF DUTCH MISSION HERE THAT NETHERLANDS PRIME MINISTER, FONMIN, AND DEFENSE MINISTER ALL ENDORSED STATEMENT):

MR. CHAIRMAN,

WHEN THE NETHERLANDS DEFENCE PLANS WERE PRESENTED TO THIS COMMITTEE ON MAY 14TH, (SIC) WE EXPLAINED THE PROVISIONAL NATURE OF THESE PLANS, WHILE IT WAS ALSO STRESSED THAT THE NETHERLANDS CABINET CONFIDENTIAL

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WOULD GIVE GREAT WEIGHT TO THE RESULTS OF NATO CONSULTATION BEFORE TAKING FINAL DECISIONS ON THE PLANS.

SINCE THEN, THE CABINET HAS GIVEN FURTHER CONSIDERATION TO THE

PLANS, TAKING PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF THE COMMENTS ALREADY RECEIVED IN THE COURSE OF THE CONSULTATION, BOTH FROM THE NATO MILITARY AUTHORITIES AS WELL AS ON THE OCCASION OF THE MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE DEFENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE ON JUNE 14TH.

IN THE LIGHT OF THOSE COMMENTS, THE CABINET HAS NOW MADE A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT DECISIONS, WHICH I HAVE BEEN AUTHORISED TO COMMUNICATE TO YOU.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, I SHOULD LIKE TO REPEAT HERE THE STATEMENT OF MR. VREDELING ON THE POSITION OF THE PLANS FOR THE ARMY, RELATING TO THE ONGOING MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. MR. VREDELING SAID VERBALLY "THAT THE NETHERLANDS INTEND TO CONFORM WITH NATO MBFR POLICY AGAINST UNILATERAL FORCE REDUCTIONS, AND THAT THIS PRINCIPLE WILL CONTINUE TO GOVERN OUR CONDUCT ON THE IMPLEMENTATIONS OF OUR PLANS FOR THE ARMY. THE PRESENT SCHEDULE FOR THE REDUCTION ON THE READY STRENGTH HAS BEEN BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT MBFR NEGOTIATIONS WILL HAVE ACHIEVED RESULTS AT THE TIME NOW FORESEEN AS THE START FOR IMPLEMENTATION.

WE MUST, HOWEVER, TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS WILL STILL BE GOING ON AND WILL NOT YET HAVE ACHIEVED THE DESIRED RESULTS AT THE TIME THAT, ACCORDING TO THE SCHEDULE FORESEEN IN THE PLANS, MEASURES TO AFFECTUATE THE REDUCTION OF THE READY STRENGTH OF THE FORCES WOULD HAVE TO START. IN THAT CASE, THE EXECUTION OF THESE MEASURES WILL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICY AGREED WITHIN THIS ALLIANCE, BE SUSPENDED.

THIS MEANS, MR. CHAIRMAN, IN OTHER WORDS THAT THE READY STRENGTH OF THE ARMY WILL NOT BE REDUCED, WHILE THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS ARE STILL GOING ON AND HAVE NOT YET ACHIEVED THE DESIRABLE RESULTS.

THE SECOND DECISION, WHICH THE CABINET HAS REACHED LAST FRIDAY IS ALSO HIGHLY IMPORTANT. IT REFERS TO THE PROPOSED PHASING OUT OF THE SO-CALLED 5TH DIVISION. I AM NOW AUTHORIZED TO STATE FORMALLY THAT THIS WILL NOT HAPPEN AND THEREFORE I CAN CONFIDENTIAL

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WITHDRAW THE STATEMENT I MADE AND WHICH WAS CONFIRMED BY GEN. WIJTING DURING HIS PRESENTATION TO THE EFFECT THAT THE NETHERLANDS ARMY CORPS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO FULFIL ITS PRESENT MISSION IN GERMANY UNTIL THE END OF THIS DECADE. I CAN NOW STATE, THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO FULFIL OUR ASSIGNMENT. I SHOULD LIKE TO ADD, THAT IN ADDITION TO ITS FULL MECHANISATION MOST OF THE UNITS OF THIS MOBILISABLE DIVISION WILL BE PUT ON A SO-CALLED RIM-BAISI. THIS MEANS THAT MORE UNITS COULD BE FULLY COMBAT READY WITHIN A FEW DAYS AFTER THE START OF MOBILISATION THAN HITHERTO.

ANOTHER ASPECT, WHICH I SHOULD LIKE TO MENTION, CONCERNS THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOME HAWK UNITS FROM GERMANY. THE PROPOSAL TO

WITHDRAW THESE UNITS HAS BEEN MADE AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION. IT WAS CONSIDERED ON THE ONE HAND, THAT THE REMAINING SIX UNITS WILL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE BELT, IN PARTICULAR WHEN THE EQUIPMENT IMPROVEMENTS WILL HAVE INCREASED THEIR CAPABILITY. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE UNITS TO BE WITHDRAWN ARE NECESSARY FOR PROVIDING AIR DEFENCE PROTECTION FOR THE AIRFIELDS IN THE NETHERLANDS, WHICH COULD OTHERWISE NOT BE REALIZED WITHIN AVAILABLE FINANCIAL LIMITS.

NEVERTHELESS, MR. CHAIRMAN, WE ARE WILLING TO STUDY TOGETHER WITH THE NATO MILITARY AUTHORITIES, THE OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSED WITHDRAWAL AND THE WAY IN WHICH SUCH A DECISION WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED.

FOR THE REST, IT SHOULD ALSO BE CLEAR THAT THE NETHERLANDS AUTHORITIES FULLY INTEND TO MAINTAIN THE CLOSEST CONTACTS WITH THE NATO MILITARY AUTHORITIES CONCERNING THE MODUS QUO OF IMPLEMENTING ALL THE NETHERLANDS PLANS.

LAST, BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST TO MY GOVERNMENT, WE REMAIN CONVINCED THAT THE MAINTENANCE OF THE FULL PRESENT SPECTRUM OF TASKS BEYOND 1980 WOULD CAUSE ALMOST INSURMOUNTABLE PROBLEMS, NOT ONLY FOR US BUT PROBABLY FOR MORE COUNTRIES OF THE ALLIANCE, IN PARTICULAR BECAUSE IN THAT PERIOD THE REPLACEMENT INVESTMENTS WOULD IMPLY A VERY HEAVY BURDEN FOR THE BUDGETS.

MY AUTHORITIES ATTACH, THEREFORE, THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO THEIR PROPOSAL FOR A STUDY CONCERNING THE IMPLEMENTATION
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OF THE NATO STRATEGY IN THE 1980'S AS MENTIONED BY MR. VREDELING AT THE DPC MEETING OF JUNE 14TH. I BELIEVE THAT THE STUDY PROPOSED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ELLSWORTH AT THE SAME MEETING, AIMING AT GREATER FLEXIBILITY AND RATIONALITY OF DEFENCE IN THE CENTRAL SECURITY, IS OF MUCH THE SAME NATURE. WE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE, THEREFORE, IF THE DPC COULD NOW ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE THAT SUCH A STUDY BE UNDERTAKEN IN THE NEAR FUTURE. THE PARTICULAR TERMS OF REFERENCE AND THE PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY COULD THEN BE SETTLED IN DUE TIME. I AM CIRCULATING A DRAFT DECISION TO THIS EFFECT.

I SHOULD ONCE MORE LIKE TO MAKE IT ABSOLUTELY CLEAR, THAT THE NETHERLANDS DECISIONS WHICH I HAVE JUST MENTIONED ARE NOT CONDITIONAL, ON THE RESULTS OF THAT STUDY. WE WILL START THAT STUDY WITH AN OPEN MIND, BUT I HOPE THAT YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS PRIMARILY IMPORTANT TO THE NETHERLANDS CABINET THAT THE DEFENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE DECIDES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BE IT IN PRINCIPLE ON SUCH A STUDY. IT IS AN ISSUE, WHICH HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF ACTIVE POLITICAL DISCUSSION IN MY COUNTRY, AND IT IS THEREFORE OF VITAL IMPORTANCE FOR THE CABINET THAT THEY CAN INFORM PARLIAMENT THAT NATO WILL DEVOTE A STUDY TO THIS QUESTION, WITHOUT IN ANY WAY PREJUDGING ITS OUTCOME.

IT WILL BE CLEAR THAT THE DECISIONS OF THE NETHERLANDS CABINET, WHICH I HAVE JUST OUTLINED FOR YOU, MEAN A CONSIDERABLE CHANGE IN THE TOTAL OUTLOOK OF THE NETHERLANDS DEFENCE PLANS PRESENTED FOR CONSULTATION. I TRUST THAT YOU WILL FIND THEM A GREAT IMPROVEMENT AND THAT THEY WILL DO MUCH TO MEET THE CONCERN EXPRESSED BY THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES AND IN THIS COMMITTEE. I MUST APOLOGIZE ON THE OTHER HAND FOR THE FACT THAT THE PRESENTATION OF THESE DECISIONS AT THIS TIME WILL CAUSE PROCEDURAL INCONVENIENCES.

IN PARTICULAR, I AM SURE YOU WILL AGREE THAT THE DRAFT DOCUMENT WHICH HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR THIS MEETING, WILL NEED IMPORTANT REVISIONS IN THE LIGHT OF THE CHANGE IN THE NETHERLANDS PLANS. IN ORDER TO FACILITATE DISCUSSION OF THIS MATTER, I HAVE PREPARED A NUMBER OF PROPOSED CHANGES IN THE DRAFT DOCUMENT, WHICH WILL BE CIRCULATED NOW AROUND THIS TABLE AND ARE SUBMITTED FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION.

FINALLY, MR. CHAIRMAN, I COME TO YOU AND TO THIS COMMITTEE
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WITH MY MOST DIFFICULT REQUEST. UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES YOU WOULD CERTAINLY EXPECT SOME REASONABLE TIME FOR FURTHER EXAMINATION OF THE PLANS AND FOR REVIEWING YOUR POSITION ON THE MATTER. I HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT YOU WILL PERMIT ME TO MAKE AN URGENT APPEAL TO YOU ON THE MATTER OF TIMING. I KNOW THAT I AM ASKING TOO MUCH FROM YOU, BUT WE ARE FACED WITH THE FACT THAT THE NETHERLANDS CABINET WOULD BE IN GREAT POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES WHEN IT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE ITS FINAL DECISION ON THE DEFENCE PAPER AT THE END OF THIS WEEK, ON FRIDAY JUNE 28TH. I THEREFORE SINCERELY HOPE THAT YOU COULD FIND WAYS AND MEANS TO FINALIZE THIS DISCUSSION ON THE NETHERLANDS PLAN DURING THIS WEEK, WHICH MEANS ON THURSDAY.
END TEXT. RUMSFELD

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